

Voluntary Pre-K Updates

September 1, 2017

Tennessee Early Learning and Developmental Standards

To align with the K-12 Tennessee Academic Standards recently adopted by the Tennessee State Board of Education, the office of early learning has revised the Tennessee Early Learning and Developmental Standards (TN ELDS) for 4-year-olds.

While there have been no significant revisions to the content of the standards, the department has worked to ensure consistent language and vertical alignment with the K-12 standards.

To ensure the best possible quality of content, the standards have been posted for review on the Early Learning web page ([here](#).) Please take a moment to review the standards and provide feedback using the link provided.

2018 Quality Improvement Project

Application feedback was provided to districts at the August VPK convening. Analysis of the applications was used to plan our tiered levels of support for the 2017-18 school year. During the first few weeks of September, you will receive detailed information regarding your tier of support. Please look over the information carefully.

If you have been chosen to participate in Tier II supports, you have already received an invitation to attend the Lead, Learn, Excel webinar hosted by TDOE and the Ounce of Prevention Fund. This is an amazing opportunity for your district leadership team, and will provide you with resources leaders can use with any grade.

If you are unable to attend the webinar, but are interested in the information, please reach out to [Candace Cook](#) for more detail.

Lead, Learn, Excel

At the VPK convening, we introduced you to an exciting opportunity. Qualifying districts have been offered the opportunity to apply to be part of Lead, Learn, Excel, which is a professional learning program that equips leaders with tools to support teachers in creating high-quality early learning environments and positive teacher-student interactions. This opportunity is being offered in partnership by the Ounce of Prevention and the department.

Informational webinars were held on Sept. 7, and were well attended. If you missed the webinars, you may access them ([here.](#)) We look forward to receiving your applications, and will provide you with a final list of participants by the end of September. The short application can be found ([here.](#))

ELM Training

The department would like to thank everyone who attended the VPK convenings in August. Please be sure to provide us with your feedback regarding the event ([here.](#))

The department will begin to provide Early Learning Model (ELM) Phase II training during the month of September. These trainings will be provided in each of the CORE regions. Districts will be encouraged to bring leadership teams who will be responsible for training teachers and leaders in the district.

We recommend that the attending leadership team consist of the following: district VPK director, building principal serving pre-K, pre-K teacher, kindergarten teacher, and someone who may serve as a coach in early grades. While substitutions may be made, no more than five members may serve on this team, as our training space is limited. The general session will run from 8:30-11:30. After lunch, we will meet with peer learning teams from 1:00-3:00. Those are the teams who, based on application scores, are eligible for strategic supports.

The dates for the trainings are as follows:

South East – Sept. 18 - The Teacher Place, 1171 W 40th St. Chattanooga, TN

South Central – Sept. 25 -SC CORE, 200 Dover Street, Shelbyville, TN

Upper Cumberland – Sept. 27 – UCHRA, 580 South Jefferson Avenue, Cookeville, TN

Mid Cumberland – Sept. 28 - Murfreesboro City BOE, 2552 South Church St. Murfreesboro, TN

First – Oct. 3 - Regional Center for Advanced Manufacturing, 305 West Main Street, Kingsport, TN

Southwest – Oct. 12 – Jackson State Community College, Jackson, TN

Northwest – Oct. 25 – Boling Center at UT Martin, 61 Mt. Pelia Rd Martin, TN

East – Oct. 26 - Sarah Simpson Center, 801 Tipton Ave. Knoxville, TN

Please register ([here.](#)) Each team member should register separately. However, the entire team should try to attend the same day.

Program Utilization and Waivers

As the school year is now underway, we would like to gather information regarding current utilization and enrollment rates. Utilization and enrollment rates are one factor considered when



funding decisions are made. We are hoping to help you with accuracy of reporting and to gather information about statewide utilization of the program. Before September 22, please click ([here](#)) to respond to a few questions about your student enrollment numbers.

Utilization rates are calculated based on the number of low-income four-year-olds enrolled in your VPK classrooms. As a reminder, per the VPK Scope of Services, all slots should be filled as of the 20th day of school. Please work to fill your open slots with Tier 1 and Tier 2 students. Reach out to Candace.Cook@tn.gov with your criteria for enrolling Tier 3 students.

Note that no district may enroll three-year-olds until a waiver is submitted and approved by the department. The process for requesting a waiver can be found attached to this email. Those waivers may be submitted to Candace.Cook@tn.gov.

2019 Applications

In the next few weeks, you will receive a link with which to provide feedback regarding the 2018 application and scoring rubric. We hope you will consider taking the time to provide rich responses. This feedback will be used to adjust the application and rubric for 2019.

Contact Information

As always, if you have any questions or concerns regarding Voluntary Pre-K, please contact Candace (Candi) Cook at Candace.Cook@tn.gov. You may also reach Candi at (615) 741-9051 or (615) 490-5061.